

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 02526 261347Z

12

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1849

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2526

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, CG

SUBJ: PANAM TAP TEAM - INONGA-HUTT MEETING

REF: KINSHASA 2496

1. SUBSEQUENT TO AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH MINISTER OF TRANSPORT INONGA (REFTEL), MINISTER SUMMONED HUTT. THREE CLOSE ADVISORS OF MINISTER ALSO PRESENT.

2. INONGA WENT OVER MUCH OF SAME GROUND REPORTED REFTEL. HE REGRETTED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HUTT HAD COME TO A STATE WHERE THEY OBLIGED WRITE LETTERS TO EACH OTHER. HE ACCUSED HUTT OF BEING UNWILLING TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS, OF EXCEEDING HIS AUTHORITY AND OF BEING A RACIST. HUTT SAYS THAT HE ASKED FOR AND OBTAINED INONGA'S PERMISSION SPEAK MAN TO MAN AND HE SAYS HE FIRMLY BUT UNEMOTIONALLY REBUTTED INONGA POINT BY POINT. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT AS HEAD OF TAP TEAM AND UNDER TERMS OF CONTRACT, HE HAD TO HAVE NECESSARY AUTHORITY TO ASSURE SAFE AND EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF AIRLINE. IF INONGA WISHED TO ASSUME THIS AUTHORITY, HE MUST ALSO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY. HUTT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PROPER NOTICE HAD NOT, AS PROVIDED IN CONTRACT, BEEN GIVEN TO INONGA CONCERNING DECISION TO FIRE COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR AND TO HIRE NEW FINANCIAL DIRECTOR.

3. CONCERNING RACIST CHARGE, HUTT EXPLAINED THAT THIS ALLEGATION STEMMED FROM A SENTENCE IN HIS LETTER DISMISSING THE COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR AND HAD TO DO WITH LATTER'S ASSOCIATION WITH NON-ZAIROIS
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 02526 261347Z

DISSIDENTS AND TROUBLE MAKERS.

4. INONGA ASKED HUTT WHAT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE FOLLOWED TO CHANGE HEAD OF TAP TEAM. HUTT REFERRED HIM TO APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPHS OF CONTRACT AND SAID GOZ SHOULD FORMALLY NOTIFY PANAM OF ITS DESIRE.

5. AT NO TIME DID INONGA INFORM HUTT THAT HE HAD BEEN DISCHARGED OR THAT GOZ HAD TAKEN DECISION TO REQUEST HIS REPLACEMENT. AT END OF MEETING, HUTT AND MINISTER SHOOK HANDS AND HUTT SAID THAT HE HOPED THEIR HAVING SPOKEN MAN-TO-MAN WOULD NOT IMPAIR THEIR FUTURE ABILITY TO WORK FOR THE BEST INTERESTS OF AIR ZAIRE. INONGA REPLIED, "YOU HAVE HURT MY PRIDE."

6. COMMENT: IT MAY BE THAT BY TIME RICE ARRIVES, INONGA WILL BE IN CALMER MOOD AND WILLING TO RECONSIDER HIS REQUEST THAT HUTT BE REPLACED AS RELAYED THROUGH AMBASSADOR. ON OTHER HAND, INONGA DOES NOT RPT NOT APPEAR AWARE OF HUTT'S LETTER TO MOBUTU (PARA 8 KINAHSA 2465). IN EVENT HE FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS LETTER, HIS REACTION COULD BE SHARP.

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